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BABY POWDER: THE LATEST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TOOL

August 17, 2011 by JoLynne Lyon

My dad has an iPad. He's also got low vision. And for a few hours over the past couple of weeks, we've been trying to figure out how he can use his new technology. He's taking advantage of the built-in speech function, but one of the most frustrating problems right out of the box was sticky fingers.

Dad's fingertips wouldn't slide easily over the touch screen. The device would talk to Dad, but he had a terrible time cruising over the icons because his fingers kept catching on the glass.

We were in the office at the CPD after hours last night, trying to figure out what to do, when he wondered aloud if a powdered substance might help. The Up to 3 program down the hall had some baby powder. I poured some onto a tissue, he dipped his fingers in it, and presto! Instant slide. Suddenly the screen was talking up a storm.

I'm not an expert, so I talked to Husband, an electronic engineer who works for a company that builds handheld devices. I asked him if baby powder will hurt a touch screen. He didn't recommend dropping the device into a vat of baby powder, but a little on the fingers shouldn't hurt.

We've got other hurdles to go, but it was nice to find a one-step solution to sticky fingers.

Disclaimer: For the best care advice for your device, talk to the experts where you bought it. And remember, never use window cleaner or other chemicals on a touch screen. Polish it with a soft cloth that's clean and dry, or use a cleaner that's specifically made for touch screens.